REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Office Communication mailed October 26, 2007, indicating that the previous response was not in compliance with 37 CFR § 1.173(b) and (d), with regard to the format of the claims presented for consideration. The present amendment replaces the amendment filed July 18, 2007, in its entirety.

Upon entry, claims 1-13, 15-25, 27-29, 34, 36, 37, 45, 52, 54, 58-60, 602, 63, 65, and 66 will be pending. Claims 61 and 64 are cancelled herewith, claims 12, 15, 23, 34, 45, 52, 58, 60, 62, and 63 are amended, and claims 65 and 66 are newly submitted.

The claim listing above is provided in the format established under 37 CFR § 1.173, while a complete listing of the pending claims with markings to show amendments is provided for the Examiner's convenience as Appendix A.

The Examiner is thanked for his allowance of claims 1-13 and 15-22. The Examiner is also thanked for his indication of allowable subject matter of claim 25 over the prior art of record.

The Examiner is also thanked for his careful study of the language of the claims and the remarks which accompanied the prior response to the Office Action. Applicant's attorney has made an effort to correct all wording and typographical error in the claims and believes they are now in condition for final presentation and allowance.

Applicant notes that on page 15, paragraph 15 the Examiner indicated that claim 27 was allowable. On the other hand, in paragraph 11, page 11, the Examiner rejected claim 27 over Brown in view of Seiber et al. Applicant therefore believes that the allowable claim which was intended was claim 37. Applicant also notes that claim 37 has subject matter similar to claim 25.

Submitted herewith is new claim 65 which contains generally the subject matter of claim 25 combined with claim 23 and new claim 66 which includes generally the subject matter of claim 37, slightly edited so as to be compatible with the features of claim 58.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention is directed toward a knife which may be easily opened with one hand. The issued patent, which contains the text of the application as originally filed states, in column 5, lines 8-22, the advantages of the present knife. Within this paragraph, the inventor clearly states that the design and engagement members, such as pin 63 of the knife allows the opening of the blade by the user with one hand.

The ability to open a knife with a single hand is an extremely useful feature. Many times a user will wish to cut a rope while holding one end of the rope tight with one hand. With prior art pocket knives, the user is required to grasp the pocket knife with both hands, using one hand to hold the handle and the other hand to grasp the blade in order to open the knife. Therefore, in the prior art, a user required two free hands in order to open the knife. The user would not be able to hold a rope or other item with one hand since both hands are required to open the knife.

According to the invention of the '927 patent as described in column 5, a user may grasp the knife in a single hand, and using a thumb of the same hand push on the pin 63′ to begin to open the blade and, once the blade is opened a short distance, the biasing member 90, also referred to as a spring 90, will exert a force to open the blade the rest of the way. Alternatively, a user may grip the teeth engagement portions C at the end of the tang as shown in Figures 5A-5C and, by pulling a finger downward, open the blade with one hand a sufficient distance that the spring 90 takes over and pushes the blade open the rest of the distance.

Accordingly, a user may hold a rope in one hand, reach into their pocket with the other hand, remove the knife of the present invention, and then cut the rope without having to let go with their hand. This is extremely convenient and has not been possible with any legal knives of the prior art.

Applicant also points out that the current knife is legal under federal law and is not classified as a switchblade or an automatic knife. In particular, a user of the inventive knife is required to open the knife partially with one hand, using their own manual power. The spring acts to hold the knife in the closed position. It is of substantial benefit that the spring exerts a holding force on the blade while it is in the closed position. The blade is biased to be held by the force of the spring in the closed position so that it does not come loose and there is no movement

of the blade when it is closed. The user must manually move the blade at least some distance, overcoming the spring force, until the blade is opened sufficient that the spring force will apply an opening force instead of a closing force. Once the blade has been opened sufficient that the bias element exerts an opening force, only then will the knife open the rest of the way under the power of the spring. Until that point, the user is required to apply manual force to open the blade. The knife is therefore legal to sell in the United States and is not considered a switchblade. Such knives have become extremely popular in recent years and have been a large reason for the resurgence of the popularity of pocket knives.

Response to Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

The Examiner has rejected claims 58-64 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Namely, it is the Examiner's view on page 3 that since claims 58-64 contain the phrase "a biasing element" that the application as filed does not provide sufficient support for this phrase.

Applicant disagrees. As a first point, applicant points out that in the application as originally filed there is only a single biasing element: spring 90. The remainder of the plunger assembly E cannot be considered as biasing elements. The shaft 80 is not a biasing element; it has no spring properties. The free end 81 is not a biasing element. The clevis 82 is not a biasing element. Indeed, no other component inside the knife is a biasing element: only the spring 90. Applicant, therefore, submits that there is sufficient disclosure that the biasing element is a single spring element and that a combination of many components to make up a biasing assembly is not required within the written description. Indeed, in the written description as originally filed there is a clear description that it is the spring 90 which provides the biasing force to open the blade.

Applicant therefore submits that there is a clear description in the application as filed which shows possession of the invention.

There is a second reason applicant believes the original disclosure supports a spring as a biasing element. Applicant refers to the Examiner's reasoning and rejection of claim 58. On page 7, under paragraph 7, the Examiner referred to Brown as having a biasing element. The Examiner referred to this biasing element as being the spring 8. Accordingly, for purposes

of showing that the biasing element was found in the prior art, the Examiner relied solely on a spring. The Examiner did not require or even state that the biasing element of the prior art needed to have a plunger assembly or a first coupling element or a second coupling element. Indeed, within the prior art, the Examiner believed that the spring alone was sufficient to teach the biasing element.

In order to be consistent, applicant believes that meaning of biasing element for claims 58-64 should be the same for the purposes of section 112 as for section 102. Since it is clear that the Examiner considers that the biasing element can be a single spring for purposes of the prior art comparison, therefore, the application as filed, showing spring 90 should also be accepted as sufficient for supporting the written description that the biasing element is a spring. The attorney accepts that the spring of Brown is a biasing element and relies on other subject matter to define over the prior art.

This is yet a second reason, beyond the first reason, why applicant believes that the biasing element as present currently in claims 58-64 is adequately disclosed in the application as filed and there is full compliance with the written description requirement for a biasing element.

Response to Rejections Based on Prior Art

It was the Examiner's view that claim 23 is found in the prior art of Brown, U.S. Patent No. 1,864,011. Applicant has amended claim 23 and believes it is clearly patentable in light of the prior art to Brown and all other prior art of record. Claim 23, as amended, specifies that the plunger, which includes a spring, has a first end pivotally coupled to the blade and a second end pivotally coupled to the handle. Of course, Brown does not have such a construction. Indeed, such a construction is foreign to Brown and renders Brown nonoperational. In Brown, the spring 8 is longitudinally extending and is in line with the handle. It is pinned at 2 and 4, and thus cannot pivot about any end. Certainly, the spring 8 can only travel in the longitudinal direction, and even if 3 can be considered a plunger, it cannot pivot about the blade and also pivot about the handle at a second end. In addition, the plate 3 is actually connected through six separate pins to the handle, as can be seen in Figures 1 and 3 of Brown. Accordingly, it of course would be impossible for the plate 3, which the Examiner refers to as a plunger, to pivot

about both a first end and a second. Claim 23 should therefore be allowable over the art of record.

Claim 45 is patentable over Brown based on the definition of the plunger as required within claim 45. Namely, claim 45 clearly states that "a portion of the plunger remains a fixed distance from the blade pivot point." This feature is directly opposite the feature operation of Brown. In Brown, the plate 3 moves back and forth and no portion remains in the fixed position. Indeed, what the Examiner refers to as "the plunger" is required to move with respect to the blade pivot point, and does not stay in fixed position from the blade pivot point. Applicant does not accept that plate 3 is a plunger or has a plunger; even if it were a plunger, it does not have the claimed feature. It is this movement of the plate 3 which transmits the spring force, quite different from the plunger and spring arrangement of the present arrangement. Claim 45 therefore embodies the concept in which the spring is a component which is physically separate from the plunger rather than of unitary construction as is required in Figures 1 and 3 of Brown. Claim 45 is therefore patentable over the prior art of record.

Claim 52 is patentable because the biasing is claimed in means-plus-function format. Applicant requests that a "biasing means for holding the blade…" be interpreted under 112, paragraph 6 for both validity and infringement. Based on *In re Donaldson*, this claim covers the embodiments disclosed in the specification and equivalents thereof. Of course, the structure of Brown is markedly different from the structure of the biasing means as disclosed in the application as filed. Nor is the structure of Brown equivalent. As can be seen, Brown uses a solid flat plate 3 coupled to a rectangular spring. This is markedly different from the biasing means of the present invention, which includes a coil spring positioned around the plunger. Indeed, the means-plus-function language of claim 52 has full support in the application as filed, an enabling disclosure of written description was provided and also does not recapture any matter which was given up. Claim 52 should therefore be allowed on the basis of *In re Donaldson* and the means-plus-function formatting of the claim element.

Claim 58 has a particular claim element which provides an advantage beyond any prior art cited by the Examiner and any known art of record. Claim 58 specifies that a contact pin is coupled to the blade. This is the pin 63′ of the application as filed, as shown in Figure 8B. The Examiner has stated that a user should be able to place their thumbnail in the notch, as

shown in Figure 1 of Brown, and overcome the spring force to open the knife. Applicant disagrees. It is applicant's experience that most knife users have relatively short thumbnails and fingernails. Indeed, a thumbnail or fingernail, even if sufficiently long to be pressed into the clip, will usually not have sufficient strength to open the knife. If the thumbnail was sufficiently long to press into the clip and begin to open the knife, there is a high likelihood that using the thumbnail will cause pain to the user or may bend the thumbnail. Additionally, when a user holds a folding knife in a position for safe and comfortable one-handed opening, as shown, for example, in Figure 5A of the present application, a blade notch would be located approximately opposite the first joint, or between the first and second joints of the user's thumb. In order to contact the notch with the thumbnail, the user would need to bend the thumb inward toward the knife, which would place the edge of the thumbnail at a right-angle with respect to the notch, and thus unable to engage the notch. On the other hand, a pin 63′ may be easily pressed open by the thumb of a user. Pushing the blade with a thumbnail is much more difficult than grasping the blade with the thumbnail and pulling it out, as is the common practice when opening a knife using two hands. Grasping a blade and pulling is common; pushing is not. The pin is believed to be an additional feature which provides further benefit in opening the knife and an additional reason for patentability beyond the patentability of claim 58.

Claim 62 contains a particular element which is neither found in nor obvious from Brown. Claim 62 specifies that the biasing element, including the spring, applies "a closing force to the blade when the blade is in the retracted position;". This feature, of the spring providing a closing force is directly opposite that of Brown. In Brown, the spring 8 is either in a neutral position or in a retained position. In either position, the spring 8 is not providing any biasing force on the blade.

This can be seen by viewing Figure 1 of Brown. The outermost edges of the apertures 6 and 5 of the plate 3 are pressed against the pins 12 and 11. This indicates that these two pins are holding the force of the spring and that the pin 13 of the blade does not have any spring force applied thereto. Indeed, if the spring 13 of Brown had a force applied thereto, the Figures would show that the plate 3 having the spring would not rest on members 12 and 11 since it would be resting on pin 13. In Brown, when the knife is closed, the spring is exerting no force onto the blade. The biasing element does not apply a holding or pressing force to the blade

when the blade is in the retracted position. Having a pressing force when closed is a unique feature which was provided in the present invention and is a specific benefit which was repeatedly explained in the application as filed. See, for example, the patent as issued, column 1, last few lines, and other places in the specification which state that the spring provides a closing force on the blade when it is in the fully retracted position. This feature of claim 62 is therefore not in the art and should be allowed.

Claim 63 contains the additional feature of a pin on the blade which extends perpendicular to a plane of travel of the blade such that a user holding the knife in one hand can apply an opening force to the blade with the thumb or finger of the same hand. Again, this feature is patentable over the prior art and contains elements not found therein. In addition, claim 63 specifies that the biasing element is coupled at a first end by a first coupling element to the handle and a second coupling element pivotally couples the second of the biasing elements to the blade. This feature is also not found in the prior art, and the claim should be patentable thereover.

Applicant believes that the claims as now presented are clearly patentable over the prior art and request allowance thereof.

Response to Recapture Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 251

Applicant believes that the present claims are not an improper recapture of subject matter given up while the application was pending. The existence of a plunger and a spring was present in claim 1 as originally filed. This is the feature which has been removed from the current claims. This is the subject matter which was initially claimed more narrowly than applicant had a right to claim. Original claim 1 contained the limitation of "a spring-biased plunger carried in the blade cavity." It also contained the additional limitation of the second end of the plunger being pivotally connected to a first end of the blade for orbital movement about the blade pivot. These were limitations in the claim as originally filed, and were more narrow than applicant had a right to claim. Applicant has submitted additional claims which are more narrow in specific elements than the claims as originally filed and the claims as amended and argued.

In the prior response, applicant provided a citation to a number of cases in an explanation why the present claims do not constitute recapture and this reissue is not an attempt to claim subject matter which was surrendered in the application during prosecution by amendment. Applicant therefore requests reconsideration of this issue, in light of the case law cited to the Examiner, and that the claims be allowed to issue.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

SEED Intellectual Property Law Group PLLC

/Harold H. Bennett II/

Harold H. Bennett II
Registration No. 52,404

HHB:cl

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 5400
Seattle, Washington 98104
Phone: (206) 622-4900
Fax: (206) 682-6031

1080306_1.DOC

APPENDIX A

1. (Original) A folding knife, comprising:

a handle defining a blade cavity and a first end;

a blade having a first end and a second end opposite said first end; said first end of said blade having a blade pivot connected to said first end of said handle for pivotal movement of said blade about said blade pivot between an extended position wherein the blade is outside of said blade cavity and a retracted position wherein the blade is substantially within said blade cavity;

a longitudinally extending plunger carried in said blade cavity having a first end and second end opposite said first end;

a pivotal connector pivotally connected to said handle for pivotally connecting said plunger to said handle, said first end of said plunger being longitudinally slidably carried by said pivotal connector for longitudinal movement of said plunger relative to said pivotal connector as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions; and

said second end of said plunger being pivotally connected to said first end of said blade for orbital movement about said blade pivot as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions.

2. (Original) A folding knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said blade includes said first end of said blade having an extension projecting outwardly from said handle when said blade is in said retracted position; said extension defining an extreme edge portion with a plurality of ridges thereon for contact by a user when moving the blade from said retracted position to said extended position.

3. (Original) A folding knife as defined in claim 2, wherein said plurality of ridges are generally saw-tooth-shaped and are generally angled in a direction substantially opposite to the direction said second end of said blade moves when moving from said retracted position to said extended position.

4. (Original) A knife as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a safety member pivotally connected to said handle for movement between a locking position and an unlocking position; said safety member defining an engagement portion projecting into said blade cavity and in the path of movement of said first end of the plunger when said safety member is in said locking position for contacting and restraining movement of said first end of said plunger when said blade is in said extended position, to thereby lock said blade in said extended position.

5. (Original) A knife as defined in claim 1, further comprising said handle defining a first side and a second side opposite said first side and a belt clip connected to said handle adjacent one of said first and second sides of said handle.

6. (Original) A knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said pivotal connector includes a sleeve having a passageway, and wherein said first end of said plunger extends through said passageway such that said first end of said plunger moves substantially rectilinearly in said passageway during said longitudinal movement of said plunger as said blade is moved between said retracted and extended positions.

7. (Original) A folding knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said pivotal connector is a sleeve having diametrically opposed pivot pins attached thereto, said pivot pins pivotally connecting said pivotal connector within said handle.

8. (Original) A folding knife as set forth in claim 1, wherein said second end of said plunger includes a clevis having a pin pivotally connected to said first end of said blade.

9. (Original) A folding knife as defined in claim 1, wherein said first end of said blade includes an arcuate slot and wherein said handle includes a pin carried in said arcuate slot, said arcuate slot having a first end and a second end, and said first end of said arcuate slot limiting said blade from movement beyond said extended position.

10. (Original) A knife as defined in claim 1, further comprising a coil spring encircling said plunger.

11. A folding knife, comprising:

a handle defining a blade cavity and a first end;

a blade having a first end and a second end opposite said first end; said first end of said blade having a blade pivot connected to said first end of said handle for pivotal movement of said blade about said blade pivot between an extended position wherein the blade is outside of said blade cavity and a retracted position wherein the blade is substantially within said blade cavity;

a longitudinally extending plunger carried in said blade cavity and having a first end and a second end wherein said second end is opposite said first end;

a pivoting sleeve provided in said handle, said sleeve receiving and longitudinally slidably carrying said first end of said plunger for longitudinal movement of said plunger relative to said sleeve as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions; and

said second end of said plunger being pivotally connected to said first end of said blade for orbital movement about said blade pivot as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions.

12. (Currently Amended) A folding knife, comprising:

a handle defining a blade cavity and a first end;

a blade having a first end and a second end opposite said first end; said first end of said blade having a blade pivot connected to said first end of said handle for pivotal movement of said blade about said blade pivot between an extended position wherein the blade is outside of said blade cavity and a retracted position wherein the blade is substantially within said blade cavity; and

a spring biased plunger assembly configured to provide a spring force to assist to maintain the blade in the extended position while the blade is in the extended position, and a

spring force to assist to [[to]] retain the blade in the retracted position while the blade is in the retracted position, the plunger assembly having:

a first end slidably and pivotably connected to said handle for longitudinal and/or pivotal movement of said plunger assembly relative to said handle as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions; and

a second end opposite said first end, said second end of said plunger assembly pivotally connected to said first end of said blade for orbital movement about said blade pivot as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions.

13. The knife as defined in claim 12, wherein said blade includes said first end of said blade having an extension projecting outwardly from said handle when said blade is in said retracted position; said extension defining an extreme edge portion with a plurality of ridges thereon for contact by a user when moving the blade from said retracted position to said extended position.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A folding knife comprising:

~~a folding knife, comprising:~~

a handle defining a blade cavity and a first end;

a blade having a first end and a second end opposite said first end; said first end of said blade having a blade pivot connected to said first end of said handle for pivotal movement of said blade about said blade pivot between an extended position wherein the blade is outside of said blade cavity and a retracted position wherein the blade is substantially within said blade cavity;

a spring biased plunger assembly configured to provide a spring force to assist to maintain the blade in the extended position while the blade is in the extended position, and a spring force to assist to [[to]] retain the blade in the retracted position while the blade is in the retracted position, the plunger assembly having:

a first end slidably and pivotably connected to said handle for longitudinal and/or pivotal movement of said plunger assembly relative to said handle as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions; and

a second end opposite said first end, said second end of said plunger assembly pivotally connected to said first end of said blade for orbital movement about said blade pivot as said blade moves between said retracted and extended positions; and

a safety member connected to said handle for movement between a locking position and an unlocking position; said safety member defining an engagement portion projecting into the path of movement of said plunger assembly for contacting said plunger.

16. A knife as defined in claim 12, further comprising said handle defining a first side and a second side opposite said first side and a belt clip connected to said handle adjacent one of said first and second sides of said handle.

17. A knife as defined in claim 12, wherein said second end of said plunger assembly includes a clevis having a pin pivotally connected to said first end of said blade.

18. A knife as defined in claim 12, wherein said first end of said blade includes an arcuate slot and wherein said handle includes a pin carried in said arcuate slot, said arcuate slot having a first end and a second end, and said first end of said arcuate slot limiting said blade from movement beyond said extended position.

19. A knife as defined in claim 12 wherein the plunger assembly comprises a plunger and a spring operatively interconnecting said plunger to said handle.

20. A knife as defined in claim 19, wherein the spring exerts a pivoting force upon the blade in response to the spring being deformed, the spring being maximally deformed when the blade is pivoted to an intermediate point between the extended position and retracted

position, thereby causing the spring to assist opening of the blade when the blade is pivoted from the retracted position toward the extended position beyond the intermediate point.

21. A knife as defined in claim 12 wherein the plunger assembly comprises a plunger and a coil spring operatively interconnecting said plunger to said handle.

22. A knife as defined in claim 21, wherein the coil spring encircles said plunger.

23. (Currently Amended) A folding knife, comprising:

a handle ~~defining~~having a blade cavity and a first end;

a blade having a first end and a second end opposite said first end,[[;]] said first end of said blade having an aperture;

a blade pivot connected to said first end of said handle and extending through the aperture for pivotal movement of said blade about said blade pivot between an extended position wherein the blade is outside of said blade cavity and a retracted position wherein the majority of the blade is ~~substantially~~ within said blade cavity; and

a plunger including a spring, the plunger pivotally connected to the blade at a first end, and ~~operatively~~ pivotally coupled to the handle at a second end, the spring being maximally deformed when the blade is pivoted to an intermediate point between the extended position and retracted position, thereby causing the spring to assist opening of the blade when the blade is pivoted from the retracted position toward the extended position beyond the intermediate point.

24. A knife as defined in claim 23, wherein said blade includes said first end of said blade having an extension projecting outwardly from said handle when said blade is in said retracted position; said extension defining an extreme edge portion with a plurality of ridges thereon for contact by a user when moving the blade from said retracted position to said extended position.

25. A knife as defined in claim 23, further comprising a safety member connected to said handle for movement between a locking position and an unlocking position; said safety member defining an engagement portion projecting into a path of movement of said plunger when said safety member is in said locking position for contacting and restraining movement of said plunger when said blade is in said extended position, to thereby lock said blade in said extended position.

26. (Cancelled)

27. A knife as defined in claim 23, further comprising said handle defining a first side and a second side opposite said first side and a belt clip connected to said handle adjacent one of said first and second sides of said handle.

28. A knife as defined in claim 23, wherein the first end of said plunger includes a clevis having a pin pivotally connected to said first end of said blade.

29. A knife as defined in claim 23, wherein said first end of said blade includes an arcuate slot and wherein said handle includes a pin carried in said arcuate slot, said arcuate slot having a first end and a second end, and said first end of said arcuate slot limiting said blade from movement beyond said extended position.

30-33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a handle;

a blade pivoted on said handle for movement between stowed and deployed conditions relative to the handle; and

an elongate, force-transmitting biasing spring having[[an]] a variable length, the spring operatively attached between said blade and said handle, where said spring exhibits both

an increase and a decrease in the length of the spring[[,]] as said blade is moved from the stowed condition to the deployed condition.

35. (Canceled)

36. The knife of claim 34 wherein the operative attachment of said spring to said blade comprises a plunger operatively interconnecting the spring to the blade.

37. A knife as defined in claim 36, further comprising a safety member connected to said handle for movement between a locking position and an unlocking position; said safety member defining an engagement portion projecting into the path of movement of said plunger for contacting said plunger.

38-44. (Canceled)

45. (Amended) A knife comprising:

a handle;

a blade pivotally coupled to the handle to be moveable about a blade pivot point, such that the blade moves between a stowed position and a deployed position; [[and]]

a plunger coupled between the handle and the blade such that a portion of the plunger remains a fixed distance from the blade pivot point; and

a spring coupled to the plunger to act on the blade to urge the blade into the stowed position when the blade is moved to the stowed position, and operates on the blade to urge the blade toward the deployed position when the blade is moved by an outside force from the stowed position at least partially toward the deployed position.

46-51. (Canceled)

52. (Currently Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a handle;

a blade having a tang [[end]] coupled to the handle, the blade configured to rotate, relative to the handle, between a retracted position and an extended position;

biasing means for holding the blade in the retracted position in the handle while the blade is in the retracted position and for biasing the blade toward the extended position relative to the handle when the blade is moved from the retracted position past a point of maximum bias toward the extended position; and

moving means for moving the blade from the retracted position to the extended position with one hand while holding the knife with the same one hand.

53. (Canceled)

54. The folding knife of claim 52 wherein the moving means comprises at least one of a plurality of ridges formed on the tang of the blade, a plurality of directional saw-like teeth formed on the tang of the blade, or a pin coupled to an upper portion of the blade.

55-57. (Canceled)

58. (Currently Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a handle;

a blade having a tang [[end]] coupled to the handle, the blade configured to rotate, relative to the handle, through an arc between a retracted position and an extended position when an opening force is applied to the blade;

a contact ~~element on~~ pin coupled to the blade and extending outward from the blade, positioned such that a user, holding the knife in one hand, can apply an opening force to the blade with a thumb or finger of the same hand;

a biasing element including a spring;

a first coupling element operatively coupling a first end of the biasing element to the handle; and

a second coupling element operatively coupling a second end of the biasing element to the blade.

59. The knife of claim 58 wherein the biasing element is arranged such that the spring thereof increases in tension to a point of maximum tension as the blade is moved through the arc from the retracted position toward the extended position, then decreases in tension as the blade continues past the point of maximum tension toward the extended position.

60. (Currently Amended) The knife of claim 58 ~~wherein the contact element comprises at least one of~~ further including a plurality of ridges ~~formed~~ positioned on the tang of the blade~~, a plurality of directional saw-like teeth formed on the tang of the blade, or a pin coupled to an upper portion of the blade~~.

61. (Canceled)

62. (Currently Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a handle;

a blade having a tang [[end]] coupled to the handle, the blade configured to rotate, relative to the handle, through an arc between a retracted position and an extended position when an opening force is applied to the blade;

a contact ~~element~~ pin on the blade, positioned such that a user, holding the knife in one hand, can apply an opening force to the blade with a thumb or finger of the same hand;

a biasing element including a spring, configured to apply a closing force to the blade while the blade is in the retracted position;

a first coupling element operatively coupling a first end of the biasing element to the handle; and

a second coupling element operatively coupling a second end of the biasing element to the blade.

63. (Currently Amended) A folding knife comprising:

a handle;

a blade having a tang [[end]] coupled to the handle, the blade configured to rotate, relative to the handle, through an arc between a retracted position and an extended position when an opening force is applied to the blade;

a contact ~~element~~ pin on the blade, extending perpendicular to a plane of travel of the blade and positioned such that a user, holding the knife in one hand, can apply an opening force to the blade with a thumb or finger of the same hand;

a biasing element including a spring, configured to resist rotation of the blade toward the extended position while the blade is in the retracted position;

a first coupling element operatively coupling a first end of the biasing element to the handle; and

a second coupling element operatively coupling a second end of the biasing element to the blade.

64. (Canceled)

65. (New) A folding knife, comprising:

a handle having a blade cavity and a first end;

a blade having a first end and a second end opposite said first end; said first end of said blade having an aperture;

a blade pivot connected to said first end of said handle and extending through the aperture for pivotal movement of said blade about said blade pivot between an extended position wherein the blade is outside of said blade cavity and a retracted position wherein the majority of the blade is within said blade cavity;

a plunger including a spring, the plunger pivotally connected to the blade at a first end, and operatively coupled to the handle at a second end, the spring being maximally deformed when the blade is pivoted to an intermediate point between the extended position and retracted

position, thereby causing the spring to assist opening of the blade when the blade is pivoted from the retracted position toward the extended position beyond the intermediate point; and

a safety member connected to said handle for movement between a locking position and an unlocking position; said safety member defining an engagement portion projecting into a path of movement of said plunger when said safety member is in said locking position for contacting and restraining movement of said plunger when said blade is in said extended position, to thereby lock said blade in said extended position.

66. (New) A folding knife comprising:

a handle;

a blade having a tang coupled to the handle, the blade configured to rotate, relative to the handle, through an arc between a retracted position and an extended position when an opening force is applied to the blade;

a contact pin on the blade, extending perpendicular to a plane of travel of the blade and positioned such that a user, holding the knife in one hand, can apply opening force to the blade with a finger of the same hand;

a biasing element including a spring, configured to resist rotation of the blade toward the extended position while the blade is in the retracted position;

a first coupling element operatively coupling a first end of the biasing element to the handle;

a second coupling element operatively coupling a second end of the biasing element to the blade; and

a locking member positioned in the handle and having a first position in which the blade may be freely moved between the retracted and extended positions and a second position in which the blade is locked in the extended position.